

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004432

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: IRAQI ELECTIONS: CANDIDATE LIST DEADLINE LOOMS;
IECI SAYS WILL HOLD FIRM

Classified By: Political Counselor Robert S. Ford for
reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶11. (C) SUMMARY. One day before the Candidate List deadline, the IECI had only received 40 - 50 political entity candidate lists containing a little over 600 potential candidates. Although this amalgamation of names is enough to conduct the December 15 elections in 15 of the 18 governorates, the major political parties have yet to submit their lists. Despite this low showing, IECI Commissioners have stressed that they intend to firmly enforce the October 28 deadline. Political parties tonight are busy working on their coalitions and election slates. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (C) On October 26, PolOff met with IECI Chairman Izaddin Al-Mohammady, Commissioner Abdul Hussein Al-Hindawi, and Commissioner Farid Ayar separately. During these meetings, the Commissioners each strongly stated their commitment to holding firm to the October 28 deadline for party coalitions and candidate lists. Chairman Al-Mohammady was especially adamant, noting that the IECI had already given parties an extension to the original deadline and that any additional extension could delay the December 15 elections. Later in the day, Dr. Farid Ayer told PolOff that there was little wiggle room, if any, to the October 28 date. He added with flourish that if not enough parties handed their candidate submissions in on time, the December 15 elections would be postponed. (Comment: as we have reported, we do not believe the TAL allows for a postponement. End Comment.)

¶13. (C) Al-Mohammday explained to PolOff that time constraints on ballot printing dictated that the IECI know on October 28 or 29, which coalitions and parties would run in which governorates. He stressed that the candidate lists submission went hand in hand with political entities declaring in which governorate they would run. Part of the reason for candidate lists, he said, would be to know which parties to print on the Anbar ballot, the Basrah ballot, and so on. He stressed that many political entities would only run in some of the governorates and not all.

¶14. (C) On October 26, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer Harith Hassan, gave Pol FSN a preliminary listing of the numbers of candidates registered for each governorate. According to that listing, 15 governorates have sufficient candidates to hold an election. No candidate lists have been submitted for Anbar, and insufficient candidates have been submitted in Baghdad, and Nineveh.

--Anbar; 8 seats, 0 candidates
--Basrah; 17 seats, 40 candidates
--Erbil; 13 seats, 19 candidates
--Qadissiya; 8 seats, 65 candidates
--Baghdad; 59 seats, 50 candidates
--Nineweh; 19 seats, 11 candidates
--Karbala; 6 seats, 6 candidates
--Kirkuk/Tameem; 9 seats, 18 candidates
--Diyala; 10 seats, 12 candidates
--Wassit; 8 seats, 38 candidates
--Theqar; 12 Seats, 70 candidates
--Sulaymania; 14 seats, 31 candidates
--Babil; 11 seats, 102 candidates
--Dohuk; 7 seats, 20 candidates,
--Najaf; 8 seats, 41 candidates
--Salahadeen; 8 seats, 13 candidates
--Muthana; 5 seats, 37 candidates
--Misan; 7 seats, 60 candidates

¶15. (C) Of the "small player" entities that have submitted candidate lists to date, only a handful have opted to run in multiple provinces. The Iraqi Communist Party currently is leading in its scope with candidate lists in 12 governorates. The major Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish parties, such as the SCIRI, DAWA, Al-SADR, PUK, KDP, and IIP, have yet to hand in their coalition and candidate lists. Various contacts told us on October 27 that they were busy finalizing lists.

¶16. (C) Al-Mohammday told PolOff that he and other

members of the IECI have continued to conduct outreach to emphasize the firmness of the deadline. A press release was issued on October 24 as well as on October 27 affirming this exact message. Additionally, Al-Mohammady said, the IECI has been conversing and promulgating this theme one-on-one with various politicians.

COMMENT

17. (C) While the Commissioners have affirmed that they will uphold the October 28 deadline, lack of big name party candidate lists could put pressure on the IECI to be flexible. However, the IECI will most likely by the deadline's time have sufficient candidates to hold the election. This being Iraq, with the lottery to determine party/coalition order on the ballots set for November 1, some parties may attempt to test the limit by delaying their slate registrations until the last possible moment.

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